



## Richard Hess

December 9, 1930 - December 20, 2020

Richard “Dick” Hess died Sunday, December 20, 2020, of natural causes, just after his 90th birthday. He was surrounded by his family. Dick was born in 1930 in Laona, Wisconsin to Frank A. and Florence A. Hess. He enjoyed a life of adventure with his older brother Robert “Bob”, and his younger brother Frank and sister Delores in Cavour and Baraboo, Wisconsin, with Cavour always considered home to the family.

At a young age, Dick showed a passion for aviation and, at the age of eleven, paid \$2 for his first airplane ride in Crandon, Wisconsin. Later, he earned his pilot’s license and purchased a single-engine Luscombe. Though the plane was later sold, he continued to rent planes at Chino Airport to take family and friends on soaring adventures in the skies of Southern California.

A significant event, and lifelong memory to Dick, dates back to May 1935, when, during the Great Depression, his family boarded a train heading to Alaska to bravely participate in the colonization of the Matanuska Valley agricultural area in Palmer, Alaska. This was the only time the United States Government ever sponsored a colony project. The family lived in a tent village for five months while they cleared a plot of land and built a house without electricity or indoor plumbing. Living in Alaska posed its challenges, however, and the family returned to Wisconsin in June 1936. Despite his young age and the short duration, in his heart, Palmer, Alaska was a big part of his life.

Dick graduated from the University of Wisconsin – Platteville with a degree in Industrial Arts in 1954, and served his country in the U.S. Army. He was stationed in Darmstadt, Germany, as a helicopter mechanic from 1954 to 1956. He began his career as a high school industrial arts teacher in Beloit, Wisconsin in 1956, while simultaneously earning his Master's Degree in Industrial Education from Northern Illinois University. In 1961, he moved to Ontario, California to start a teaching job at Chaffey High School.

After the move to California, he became actively involved in the Catholic Alumni Club where he served as President and met Mary Ellen Sanner who was the Secretary. On Valentine's Day 1963, Dick proposed to Mary Ellen and they were married in July. After the birth of their first child, they moved into a home in Ontario, California in June 1964 where Dick could walk or, occasionally, drive his 1960 Black Volkswagen Bug to work. Dick designed and constructed an addition of two bedrooms and a bath to the house so they could raise their growing family and make memories at the home for 55 years.

He was a beloved teacher and after more than three decades of teaching at Chaffey High School, the district offered these words of thanks at his retirement:

We pay tribute to you, not just for thirty-one years of service, but for your attributes of loyalty and steadfastness, high standards of professionalism, genuine concern for young people in helping them toward the goal of self-realization, and deep commitment to the ideals of education. You have served as an inspiration to many – for this, we say a simple but heartfelt 'thank you,' and wish for you in your retirement all the benefits and blessings which you so richly deserve.

Dick was well known for his creative, mechanical mind and a wonderful sense

of humor. He could fix and build anything with the many tools he kept in his garage and every encounter with Dick was peppered with one of his corny jokes! He was especially known for “teaching fractions” by using the half pointer finger on his right hand that he lost as a five-year-old. He chose a life of service and utilized his talents for both family and community. His volunteer hours for charity and service organizations were extensive. Some of his most significant contributions were serving as captain for over forty years to the men’s annual spiritual retreat at El Carmelo Retreat House. He also volunteered at St. George Catholic Church in many capacities. Remarkably, this included running his own ‘used furnishings warehouse’ to aid the many Vietnamese immigrants as they relocated to the community. Later in life, he joined the Knights of Columbus service organization and was legendary for his command of their annual Lenten Fish Fry. He also supported his children’s activities including Boy and Girl Scouts, the YMCA Adventure Guides, youth soccer, and high school athletics.

Dick is survived by Mary Ellen, his daughters Cynthia M. Tessin and Julie A. Chevraux (Matt), and son Joseph R. Hess (Isabel), six grandchildren – Thomas, John, Garrett, Sarah, Ryan, and Alyssa, his brother Robert G. Hess (Phyllis), his sister Delores A. Triest, and many nieces, nephews, and cousins. Dick was predeceased by his parents and brother Frank O. Hess.

The family will be holding a viewing on Thursday, January 7, 2021 at Draper Mortuary from 4 – 8 pm. Social distancing protocol will be followed and appointments can be made at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0D4AAF A922A7FC1-viewing>. Interment will be private.

In lieu of flowers, those planning an expression of sympathy are asked to consider making a donation to the Palmer Historical Society ([www.palmerhistoricalsociety.com](http://www.palmerhistoricalsociety.com)) or the Knights of Columbus ([www.kofc.org](http://www.kofc.org)).



# Previous Events

## Viewing

JAN 7. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (PT)

Draper Mortuary  
811 North Mountain Avenue  
Ontario, CA 91762

# Tribute Wall



“ *Reflecting on Memories created a Tribute Video in memory of Richard Hess*



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**Reflecting on Memories** - December 24, 2020 at 06:39 PM



*Dick, a life well lived and shared with so many. You were always doing for others and were so ready to help others. You touched and changed so many lives, mine included. Teacher, man of Faith, joke teller, humorist, pilot, historian, veteran, friend, husband, father, brother, grandfather....so many roles done so well. May you rest in peace knowing you lived a great life, loved and were loved. You will be missed.*

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**Leanne Graff** - December 28, 2020 at 09:09 PM



“ *My deepest condolences to the Hess family. I have known Mr. Hess for a great many number of years. Attending school with Julie and scouts with Joe. For the last several years, I would see him at the Church fish fry and we would catch up on what was happening from the past year. I will truly miss our conversations. Davidaustin1973@gmail.com*

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**Dave Austin** - January 06, 2021 at 10:32 PM

AP

“ Mr. Hess was my High School Drafting teacher in 1971-1975. His classes were always my favorites. That was the start of our 50 year friendship. Later at the age of 22 I became a Policeman in Ontario and I would work the Chaffey Football gamers for some extra money, I'd see Mr. Hess there and we had many conversations about how I should be doing my job. He was also my fellow parishioner at St George Church and later at St Anthony's. My wife Julia and I enjoyed many church dinners together, with Dick and Maryellen, and they graced us with their attendance at my retirement dinner. I always thought of Dick Hess as the kind of man I wanted to be, a man of faith, kindness and giving. We will miss him very much.

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**Alfredo Parra** - January 03, 2021 at 09:20 PM

SG

“ Our sympathies to the Hess family. We were your neighbors on Bonnie Brea in the late 80's and early 90's. I saw Dick's obituary this morning and was reminded of a story by my daughter. She said when she got bunk beds at the age of four, she invited Dick over for a slumber party! He kindly told her no thank you, that Mrs Hess probably wouldn't like that 😊. Fun memories.

We loved our home in Ontario, Dick and his family were one of the reasons the neighborhood was so special.

My Condolences, Susan Gass

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**Susan Gass** - January 03, 2021 at 10:54 AM

MM

“ *Mary Ellen and family, I share this as a remembrance from the Van Sickles. My mom Millie along with my dad Robert thought the world of your family. I have great memories of babysitting the children and your darling house. I feel my mama was part of the welcoming committees as your dad reached heaven. So sorry for your great loss. He was an admiral man. Thank you so much for this posting this on Facebook. Your family is in my prayers.*

*Fondly,  
Mary Lynne (Van Sickle) Morton*

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**Mary Lynne Morton** - January 01, 2021 at 07:00 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Richard Hess.*



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January 01, 2021 at 10:36 AM

GC

“ I have fond memories of Dick. I first met him during the Solvang Endurance Bike Race. He was always a great planner & organizer- he put me to work immediately setting up the bike course with the proper warning traffic road signs, and we became good friends from then on. We would attend the Knights of Columbus meetings together, in addition to many family gatherings such as wine tasting., picnics , breakfasts after Church, etc..  
When the Knights of Columbus had their fish fry during lent, he would always instruct the young school kid helpers on what to do and of course he would tell a few jokes .Dick & I would occasionally talk about Engineering and he always had an idea on how to make something better.  
I will always remember Dick with such good memories over the years. When we meet again in heaven, we'll just pick up were we left off.

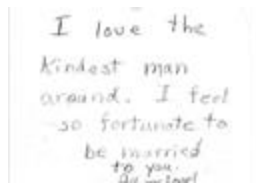
Your friend,  
George Cerisara

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**George Cerisara** - December 31, 2020 at 01:22 PM

CT

“ 1 file added to the album



I love the  
kindest man  
around. I feel  
so fortunate to  
be married  
to you.

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**Cynthia Tessin** - December 31, 2020 at 11:28 AM

JH

“ To sign up for a viewing time at Draper Mortuary on 1/7 use this link.  
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0d4aafa922a7fc1-viewing>

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**Joe Hess** - December 29, 2020 at 06:10 PM

MG

“ I hardly know where to start, but here goes. Many years ago Tom and I were laying sod in our backyard, in 100 degrees or more, when Dick stopped by, without saying a word he left, went home, changed his clothes, came back and helped us lay the sod! This was the way Dick helped people, quietly and without fanfare. He was a big help to me when I was in charge of decorating at St. George. I would get an idea, like the backdrop for the crib at Christmas and Tom would dismiss it, but Dick would go along with me. They both built it and everyone loved it. The four of us went to Europe three times and had a great time. We went to my mothers village In Hungary and Tom, Dick and Mary Ellen loved it and enjoyed all the translating. Every Friday we played Euchre and because Tom suffered from osteoporosis, Dick always made sure he was comfortable, getting pillows etc. That was Dick miss you my friend and pray you have met up with Tom.

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**Marianne Graham** - December 29, 2020 at 02:54 PM



“ To the Hess family; you have my sincerest condolences for your loss of Richard. I knew Ricard as "Mr. Hess" during my years as a Boy Scout at Troop 301. I also new Mr. Hess for the better part of 4 years, as a drafting student of his from 1984 - 1987, at Chaffey High School. I have many fond memories of him and his awesome sense of humor. I remember a phrase of his, that he often said; something about "Frijoles and Beans". I always enjoyed his infectious smile and laugh. Mr. Hess was also instrumental in my career. At the end of my senior year at Chaffey, I asked Mr. Hess if he knew any companies looking for a summer draftsperson. Mr. Hess connected me with an engineering company in Ontario. That drafting job turned into Land Surveying. From land surveying, it turned into Industrial surveying, then surveying equipment sales and management. Over 30 years later, I'm still in that industry. I'm sure there are many, many others that Mr Hess had a huge impact on their lives. Thank you Mr. Hess, you are a great man, may you rest in peace.  
Sincerely, Michael Strom

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**Michael Strom** - December 29, 2020 at 01:13 PM

DB

“ I fondly remember my funny Uncle Dick. We spent many holidays together and several summers in Ontario playing and swimming with the whole family! I loved looking through all the pictures and seeing all the family and activities that created so many memories that I know are so cherished. Uncle Dick will definitely be missed so much! Love to all, his niece, Debbie Griffith Blair.



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**Debbie Griffith Blair** - December 28, 2020 at 07:26 PM

MG

“ *Mr. Hess (Dick) was always a pleasure to be around, quick with a joke and a smile. We always enjoyed the time we got to spend with him. We need more of his type in this world and he will be missed.*

*Mike, Andrea, Sean and Matt Goode*

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**Mike Goode** - December 28, 2020 at 06:04 PM

CT

“ *119 files added to the album Hess Family Photos*



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**Cynthia Tessin** - December 28, 2020 at 02:17 PM